

‘Summit Of Hope’ Expo Aims To Help Ex-Cons Get Lives Back On Track

August 6, 2013 12:16 PM By Bernie Tafoya, WBBM Radio, CBS Chicago

HARVEY, Ill. (CBS) – Hundreds of ex-offenders turned out in suburban Harvey on Tuesday. They attended an Illinois Department of Corrections resources fair designed to help them reintegrate into society.

WBBM Newsradio’s Bernie Tafoya reported the “Summit of Hope” expo was one of at least a dozen held during the year throughout the state. The expo helps ex-offenders with everything from job interviewing skills to physical exams, HIV testing to getting a job and from bank accounts to driver’s licenses or state IDs.

Joseph Guido, 28, has been out of prison for nearly a year, after serving three years behind bars for car theft. He said it’s been hard to find work.

“Labor jobs, mostly; I mean, that’s the only people that hire convicts. I mean, cash-paying jobs,” he said. “Burger King won’t even hire you, so it kind of stinks.”

Rodney Jones, 44, spent 10 years in prison, and was released in March, and said he’s optimistic about getting his life back on track.

“I think it’s a blessing that there’s something that can help us back into society, and stay successful, then not going back to prison,” he said.

Marcus King, senior community outreach administrator for the Illinois Department of Corrections, has been running the expos for the state, and he said they help ex-cons from going back to prison.

“There are a lot of ex-offenders who hope that they can do better. Here at the Summit of Hope, you see them they leave with positive attitudes,” King said.